

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 6-7 remain pending after amendment.

Claim Amendments

By this amendment, claim 5 is cancelled and the limitations thereof added to claim 1. An editorial amendment is made in claim 6. No new matter is added by this amendment.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter of claim 5. In response, the limitations of claim 5 are added to independent claim 1. As a result, all pending claims are believed to be directed to allowable subject matter.

Rejection under 35 USC 103(a)


Claims 1-4 and 6-7 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fukuda et al in view of Maxson et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In response, the limitations of allowed claim 5 are added to claim 1. The rejection is thus moot and should be withdrawn.


The application is in condition for allowance, and an early indication of same is earnestly requested.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Andrew D. Meikle (Reg. No.32,868) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

 Dated: October 13, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 
Andrew D. Meikle *Reg. No. 32,868*
Registration No.: 32,868
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH,
LLP
8110 Gatehouse Rd
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorneys for Applicant